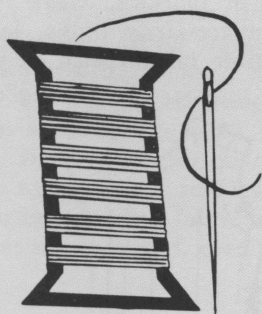


# FACT SHEET

MAY 9 1975

JW  
10m

L-1000



## FAKE FUR LOOKS ALL SEWN UP

Becky Culp\*

Which fur fabric will it be — a deep, medium or short pile? Furs are ideal choices for coats, jackets, stoles, capes and accessories. Be creative with fur trims for collars, cuffs, hems, sleeves, pockets, linings or recycling updates. Fake furs can be warm, fun, fashionable and a challenging adventure to sew.



### Fabrics

Many varieties of fake furs are available by the yard. Some resemble real furs, while others are original designs. The pile may be shaggy, velvety, curled or brushed with an up and down or cross-wise direction. The surface pile and backing may be of the same fiber or of two different fibers. The most common fibers used are cotton, rayon, nylon, acrylic, polyester or modacrylic. The backing base may be woven or knitted. As with regular fabrics, a knitted base is generally more flexible and easier to work with. Stabilized or stiff backings are difficult to use. Due to the pile, fake furs are usually thicker than regular fabrics. Just as with real fur, a high quality fake fur will have a dense, thick and supple coat. A fold should not show the fabric base.

\*Extension clothing specialist, The Texas A&M University System.



### Care

Fiber content, fabric construction and finishing techniques will determine care recommendations. Refer to the permanent care label for specific instructions. Some pile fabrics are washable, but many require drycleaning. If recommended care procedures are not known, take the garment to a reputable, professional drycleaner.

To store before cutting, fake furs should be loosely rolled or suspended from a hanger so that the pile will not be crushed or the backing wrinkled. With some fabrics, wrinkles shake out easily and the pile can be fluffed by light brushing. Always test steam or iron temperatures on a seam or hem allowance before pressing. Never press the face of the fur.

### Patterns

Many patterns are designed especially for garments made from fur or fur and fabric combinations. Check the fabric suggestions on the pattern envelope. Patterns suitable for heavyweight fabrics are also ideal choices for fur garments. Simple design lines accent the beauty of fake fur. Avoid gathers, pleats, unnecessary bulk or seaming details. Patterns without zippers and buttonholes and with raglan sleeves are easier to construct. Buy yardage for "with nap" layout. If this is not given, add  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  yard (.3 to .6 meters) for cutting one way and matching designs.

Fake furs also combine well with leather, suede, woolens, tweeds, corduroy or other furs for interesting texture accents. When lining a garment with fake fur, a size larger pattern may be required, particularly if a bulky fur is to be used. Sleeves should not be lined in fur, but in a slippery fabric for ease in sliding on and off. For all other garment styles, choose the pattern size normally worn.

If possible, try on fake fur ready-to-wear garments before selecting a fabric and pattern. Decide which fabric and design looks best on you. Deep and long furs usually add bulk and weight to one's appearance. A short hair fur with a large print may seem bulkier than a solid, longer pile. Glossy piles will seem larger than those with dull or matte textures. Closely fitted designs minimize the illusion of added weight, while extra garment ease adds pounds to the silhouette, especially with deep pile fake fur.



### Inner Fabrics

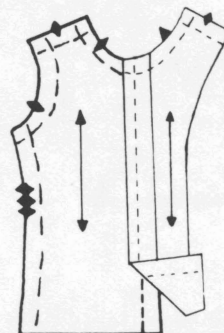
Inner fabrics should not be heavier or bulkier than the fake fur. Fusibles should be used for inner fabrics only on fake fur that can withstand the necessary heat and steam. Interfacing is needed for support and shape. Underlining usually is not required due to the firmness and stability of most fake furs. Lining is used except for casual or reversible styles. If unlined, seams are bound or finished to prevent shedding. Classic fur styles often are lined with satin, brocade or crepe. For a rough-backed fake fur, the lining should be sturdy enough to resist abrasion.

### Cutting

Most fake furs are stabilized and do not need straightening. All washable inner and outer fabrics and notions that will be laundered should be pre-shrunk in the same way they will be laundered later.

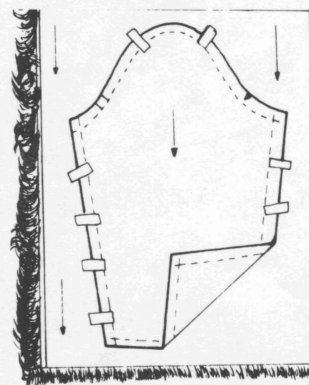
Patterns should be altered to fit before cutting, because pile fabrics are difficult to rip and alter and original stitching lines may remain in some fake fur fabrics.

Straight-grain, center front, center back and facing seams can be eliminated to reduce bulk. Trace pattern pieces on tissue paper or tape them together on seam lines for a whole pattern piece. For collars, cuffs or plackets, where two layers of fur would be unnecessarily bulky, face with the lining or compatible fabrics such as wool flannel or cotton duck.



All obvious stripes and designs should be matched. Designs can be marked on the fabric backing for ease in positioning the pattern. Most short and long piles should be cut so that the pile smooths downward when worn. Fake sheared beaver, muskrat and seal should be cut so that the pile smooths upward. Curly furs do not have a direction and do not need to be cut in one direction. Bias cut pattern pieces are not suitable for fake fur and should be changed to run in the direction of the fur.

Attach the pattern to the wrong side of the fabric with pins in dart and seam allowances, or tape at pattern edges to prevent marring the fabric. Cut fabric one layer at a time.



Fake furs are most easily cut with shears through the backing. Single-edge razor blades can be used, but they are more difficult to handle. When cutting deep piles with shears, use the tips of the shears and cut with short snips. Hold the fabric up so that the bottom blade will separate the pile. Notches, darts and placement lines should be marked with pencil, felt-tip pen, chalk or thread on the fabric backing.

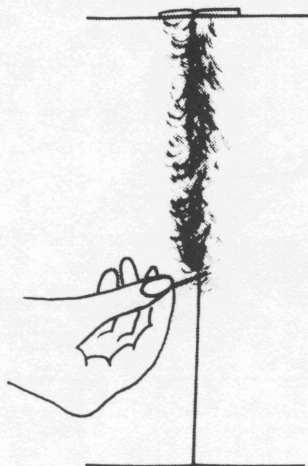


## Machine Preparation

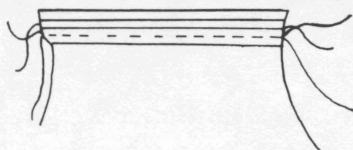
Use spun polyester or polyester core thread in general purpose sizes. Select a size 14 or 16 needle with a sharp point for woven backing and a ball-point for knit. For short piles, set stitch on 12 for straight stitching and 15 for zigzag. Long piles are more compatible with a longer stitch length; for these use 10 for straight stitching and 12 for zigzag. Tension and pressure must be adjusted suitably (usually lighter) for the machine and fabric. Using fabric scraps, stitch test seams with various machine adjustments until fabric lengths feed evenly and stitches are balanced, even and secure.

## Seams

A wide variety of seams is appropriate for fake furs, due to the range in textures, pile lengths and garment designs. It is wise to experiment with various seams to find those most suitable for the fur and function of the seam. Stitch all seams in the direction of the pile. Long piles should be pushed away or parted from seam lines as the seams are pinned together or sewn. Pile caught in the stitching can be released by pulling through to the right side with a needle or pin. Seam allowances should not be trimmed until pile is pulled through.

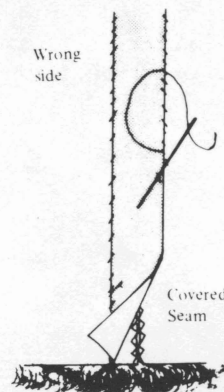


Flexible or knit-backed furs should be reinforced with twill tape stitched into the seam, so that seams will give support and not stretch.

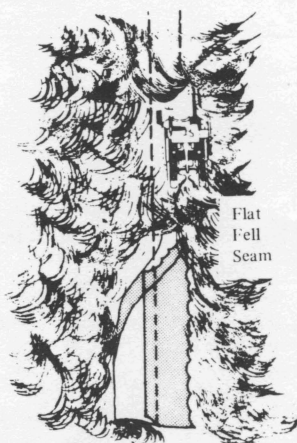


For a *lined, short or lightweight pile*, treat seams as you would for regular fabric. Follow pattern directions. To reduce shedding, finish seam edges with a wide zigzag. Seams may be glued or tacked flat if necessary.

For a *lined, medium or long pile*, stitch with a plain or multiple zigzag or with two rows of straight stitching  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch apart. Pull hairs through to right side and trim seam allowance to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. For piles shorter than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, seam allowances may be trimmed first. Any extra pile left on the inside can be sheared away before finishing the seam edge. Shearing may eliminate the need for seam finishing by removing shedding pile. To prevent abrasion of the lining, hand baste pre-shrunk  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch twill tape over scratchy seams.



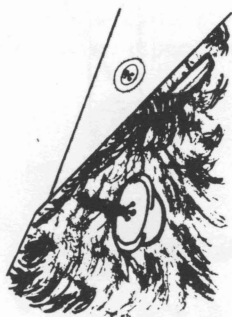
For *unlined furs*, seams should be enclosed or finished with a decorative covering. Seam edges can be bound or covered with tape, braid, ribbon or leatherlike fabrics. Flat-fell seams can be used to neatly finish short or medium length piles. To do this, straight stitch a plain seam with wrong sides together. Trim one seam allowance to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Shear away the pile from the short seam allowance and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of the garment area underneath. Turn under the wide seam allowance  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch and top stitch or slip stitch in place.



Construct darts according to pattern instructions. Release pile from stitching, and trim dart to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Shear excess pile and finish raw edges as you would seams.

## Closures

Ideal closures for fake fur garments include covered snaps, large covered hooks and eyes or rings, chains, frogs, and button loops of braid, elastic, leather or fabric. Buttons should be sewn on with heavy waxed thread or buttonhole twist. Reinforce buttons by sewing through a small flat button on the fabric back. An extra-long shank may be necessary to accommodate the garment thickness. Buttons also can be used to trim a snap closure. In short pile furs, bound, corded or machine-made buttonholes are appropriate. Buttonholes are difficult in medium or long piles; however, bound buttonholes with strips of ribbon, leather or fabric for lips may be used.

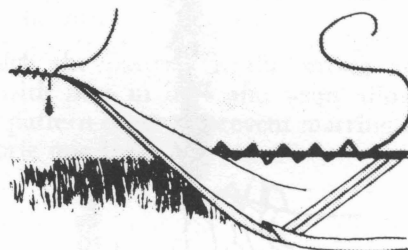


Zippers must be attached so that pile will not catch in zipper teeth. Decorative zippers are the easiest and most functional. Stitch decorative ribbon, leather or other trim next to zipper teeth. Miter the corners at the bottom for an enclosed zipper, or turn the ends under for a separating zipper. Trim the fur, leaving a centered opening  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wider than the zipper teeth. Shear pile the width of the decorative trim to eliminate bulk. Insert fur between trim and zipper tape. Slip stitch or top stitch in place.



## Hems

When marking hem length, remember that the length of the pile will extend longer than the fold line. For short pile fabrics and sleeves, hem with a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hem allowance. Use a bound hem finish and a double row of hemming stitches, the first row  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from the folded hemline and the second at the hem edge. To reduce bulk in medium or long pile fabrics, face hem with a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch bias strip of the lining fabric, grosgrain ribbon or bias hemming tape. One inch of the pile should be turned up from the hemline with the facing attached above, making the total hem depth  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Hem with two rows of stitches, one at the facing seamline and one at the top.



---

The original manuscript of this publication was prepared by Fannie Brown Eaton, former Extension clothing specialist.

## References

- Donovan, Hedley, ed. *Novel Materials*. New York: Time Life Books, 1974.  
"Fur-ther Relating," *Clothes*. Products, Inc., July 1, 1974.  
Hutton, Jessie. *Singer Fashion Tailoring*. The Singer Company, 1973.  
Perry, Patricia, ed. *Everything About Sewing Fur and Fur-Like Fabrics from Vogue Patterns*. Butterick Fashion Marketing Company, 1971.  
*Sewing Today's Fabrics*. Coats & Clark, Inc.  
*Sewing Today's Fabrics—Fake Fur*. Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University, 1972.  
*The Vogue Sewing Book, Revised Edition*. Vogue Patterns, 1973.

---

*Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic levels, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.*

---

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, The Texas A&M University System and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914.

10M-3-75, Revised

CLO 3-2